

# Passenger-Only Ferry Developments

*Presentation to the Transportation Commission*

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# Background

**An Application by Pacific Boat Enterprises, LLC has been filed with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) seeking an operating certificate for:**

- Passenger-only service between Seattle and Harper (site of abandoned ferry terminal near Southworth) in Kitsap County
- Three round trips in a.m. and p.m. peak periods
- Full fare \$7.00 each way
- 20 ride ticket book priced at \$6.00 each way
- 20 minute crossing, hourly schedule
- Estimated yearly ridership range from 75,600 – 113,400
- 18 month start up time

**Other certificate applications for this route may also be filed soon.**

# Schedule for UTC Consideration

**UTC controls schedule. A hearing might be held before late January, or could be delayed.**

A factor in the schedule may be presented by a letter from the Chair of the House Transportation Committee advising the UTC that state-funded passenger-only service on the Seattle-Vashon-Southworth route will be a major policy issue in the 2005 legislative session and requesting that consideration of the pending application wait until the legislative process concludes.

# **Passenger/Taxpayer Interest in Impact of Proposed Service on WSF Services**

## **Existing Seattle-Vashon passenger-only ferry service with connecting service to Southworth.**

- Proposed service at predicted ridership levels would divert on the order of fifty percent of existing route ridership from the current passenger-only service to Seattle.
- Estimated annual revenue loss from the existing passenger-only service to Seattle would be on the order of approximately \$320,000 at service commencement
- Resulting operating cost pressures could be addressed by smaller vessel, reduced frequencies or increased state subsidy. If these changes could not be made, viability of service could be threatened with negative impacts on cross-Sound and inside-King County transportation services to the public.

## **Existing Fauntleroy-Southworth passenger/vehicle service**

- Proposed service at predicted ridership levels would also divert ridership from the existing service to Fauntleroy. The estimated annual revenue loss from the diversion would be approximately \$90,000 at service commencement.
- This change would decrease revenue support for the route and require fare adjustments or additional state subvention.

# Interest in Impacts -- Continued

**“10-year vision” report requested by Legislature on passenger services across Puget Sound identifies a potential WSF operated Seattle-Vashon-Southworth passenger-only service.**

- Uses existing vessels *Chinook* and *Snohomish*
- Uses existing terminals at Vashon and Southworth supporting strong inter-modal connections (terminal modifications required).
- Depends upon suitable provisions of labor agreements
- Lays out a passenger service concept in south Puget Sound that strengthens service both to Vashon Island and south Kitsap County.

**Operation of the service proposed for approval to the UTC would preclude the development of this potential WSF triangle Seattle-Vashon-Southworth service.**

# WSDOT/WSF Proposed Course of Action

- WSDOT intends to closely follow and support legislative consideration of the Seattle-Vashon-Southworth triangle service identified in the “10 year vision” report prepared in response to the Legislature’s request.
- RCW 81.84.020(4) provides that the UTC in considering an application “shall consider and give substantial weight to the effect of its decision on public agencies operating, or eligible to operate, passenger only ferries.”
- Depending on the form and timing of UTC consideration of the pending application, WSDOT will either formally intervene or informally comment in the UTC proceeding. The purpose of the WSDOT submission will be to assure that the UTC is fully informed about the potential effects of the proposed service on existing WSF services and, if the Legislature should proceed to support the service, the potential WSF triangle passenger only service in south Puget Sound.